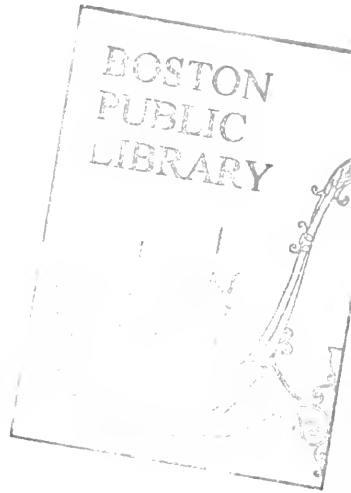


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A STUDY FOR
ASIAN COMMUNITY'S NEEDS
FOR A CULTURAL CENTER

a proposal

to

Boston Redevelopment Authority
Ms. Kristein McCormack
Director of Planning for Midtown Cultural District

from

Chinese Culture Institute
Dr. Doris C.J. Chu, President
276 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02116

Marked to show similarities with CCI and ARW proposals

In January of 1987, at the BRA's request, I drafted a recommendation for an Asian cultural center with various components for BRA's reference. After two and half years serving as a member of the Mid-town Cultural District Task Force and its committees, I feel that what seemed to be a dream at the beginning of 1987 may become reality in the near future. Since a center for Asian arts and culture is in the District's plan, it is important that the planners know precisely what the realistic needs of the Asian cultural community are.

THE CULTURAL COMMUNITY WITHIN THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Asian Americans are currently the second fastest growing minority group in the state. They have come to the Boston area in quest for higher education, to join their families that have been here for a long time, and in response to the strong Massachusetts economy.

ARW
1st sentence identical to 1st sentence on p. 1

Many of Boston's local Asian arts groups are still in their infancy, struggling to build their skills and establish themselves, while others are seeking to develop further and increase their audiences. These organizations and individuals must often make do with inadequate facilities and funding at scattered locations, in temporary or borrowed spaces. The present space (CCI) is limited, it can not meet all the needs of the Asian cultural community. Without facilities, funding, and opportunities, many Asian cultural group are frustrated and discouraged. Many performers, for instance, can only practice their trade once in a great while when there is a chance. While their talents are buried, Boston's loss is tremendous. Many touring companies from Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland often skip Boston because there is no readily available theatre to stage their show and Asian performing groups in Boston are often so frustrated with the difficulties in booking a performance space.

Identical to 1st 2 sentences 3d p. 1

A PROPOSED CENTER FOR ASIAN ARTS AND CULTURE

The development of the Mid-town Cultural District, which abuts the heart of Chinatown, presents a golden opportunity for the creation of a center for Asian arts and culture in the Hinge Block of the District. The location is ideal in that its proximity to the only Asian community in Boston with a land base and sizable population would provide it with a ready made audience. Its vitality would be further encouraged by the through traffic which will come with the growth of the Cultural District. Chinatown is the economic, social and cultural hub of the Asian American community. Asian from all over the state come regularly to Chinatown to use its services and participate in its activities.

Virtually identical 1st paragraph on p. 1

The community needs more than businesses for its development. The arts play an important role in defining and giving identity to a community. An Asian cultural center located in the Hinge Block along with other cultural and arts groups will be beneficial to both because each will be stimulated by the activities of the other. Having a thriving Asian cultural center there would also make a great deal of sense to the District itself. This center could serve not only the needs of the Chinatown community, but also the broader Asian community.

Very similar to 3d paragraph on p. 2

The Chinese Culture Institute proposes that a multi-faceted Asian cultural center which encompasses visual and performing arts and educational programs be developed. We believe such a facility, if appropriately sited within the Hinge Block between Chinatown and the Theatre District, would add a unique flavor to the Mid-town cultural scene while serving the Asian American community.

AAW

} virtually identical to last paragraph on p. 2

COMPONENTS OF THE PROPOSED CENTER

A cultural center serving the diverse needs of the Asian cultural community would need to include facilities for visual arts, performing arts, media, research, education, administration, and to be truly part of the community, space for public events.

} virtually identical to 1st paragraph p. 3

Visual Art:

The Chinese Culture Institute (CCI) has the only gallery in Boston which shows primarily Asian American art and contemporary Chinese art. At least another gallery is needed in order to give the talented Asian artists in the Boston area the opportunity to make their work known and prominent Asian artists from other part of the U.S. and abroad to share their art with us. The wealth of Asian art, from traditional to the avant garde, will greatly enrich our cultural experience.

} very similar to 2d paragraph of p. 3

Media Art:

Improving the audio visual production facilities would encourage greater participation by various ethnic groups in the media for the Asian community. An Asian television production studio and radio station or audio production facilities could produce multi-lingual programs for distribution to radio and cable television network.

} identical to last ¶ on p. 3

Performing Arts:

There are numerous Asian and Asian American performing groups in the Boston area representing Cambodian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Philipino, Vietnamese, and other nationalities. Their disciplines range from traditional and modern dance and theatrical production to storytelling, and classical and contemporary music. Most of the Asian performing groups use private homes for rehearsals and stage their art only at ethnic and multi-cultural celebrations, community gatherings and schools. Only a few have their own studios. In addition, Boston is regularly visited by touring troupes from Asia whose performances are well attended.

} very similar to 1st paragraph on p. 4

If the Asian performing community is to develop and expand its audience further, a multi-purpose theatre with a stage suitable for dance and dramatic productions, as well as film screenings would be required.

} identical to 2d paragraph on p. 4

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Educational Programs:

Educational programming is important to train young artists and increase the public's appreciation for Asian and Asian American culture. Currently, there are folk arts internship, storytelling with Asian themes, language classes, painting classes, Chinese health improving technique classes and various workshops. Many of these are sponsored by the Chinese Culture Institute. CCI has a hard time scheduling them. If the new Asian center has class room space some of these and many others will be implemented there. In addition, the class rooms could be used for English As A Second Language (ESL) program and citizenship examination preparation classes for which there is a constant and unmet demand.

AKW
quite
similar to
last
paragraph
on p. 4
and 1st
paragraph
on p. 5

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

The Asian community in Boston does not have an adequate space for special gatherings such as conferences, community meetings, celebrations, receptions and cultural events. There is a definite need for such a space. In addition, office space for a variety of cultural organizations will give stability to these groups which either presently have no offices or are in a precarious tenant position.

very
similar
to 2d + 3rd
paragraph
on p. 5
and 1st
paragraph
on p. 6

A large strium space would serve these various needs and help bring communities together.

Support Space:

In addition to the above, space to support the entire complex would include bathrooms, a kitchen, storage rooms, and maintenance space.

A STUDY OF THE NEED FOR SUCH FACILITIES

The Chinese Culture Institute proposes to conduct a study to find out exactly how many performing groups and individual performing artists and visual artists are there in Boston's Asian community and how often touring groups would visit Boston if we have the facilities. We will also assess the realistic needs for art exhibition space, audio visual production facilities, class room space, public conference space and office space. From the result of this study we will get a clear indication as to the size and type of facilities to be planned.

